



Incorporating Action Research Into In-Service Teacher Education (INSET) Programs*

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Abstract

Most teacher cognition research to date have focused on teachers beliefs about themselves as writers, literacy, teaching and learning, and decision-making processes. Very few, if any, however, investigated teachers' deliberate decision-making processes before, during and after action research processes. In an attempt to address this gap in literature, this exploratory research study investigates the influence of action research on teacher cognition. The present research adopts a qualitative research methodology. During one academic year (i.e. two fifteen-week semesters), MA-student in-service teachers were asked to complete English teachers' action research proposals, reports and reflections. In an attempt to get a fuller perspective on teachers' perceptions on action research, they were interviewed regarding their action research projects. Content analysis was employed to analyze the data obtained from reflections, reports and interviews. Results indicated that participants, while expressing willingness to integrate action research in their teaching practices, were not able to fully utilize action research in their teaching, due to an interplay of contextual and institutional constraints. The outcomes of the present study aims to shed light on English teachers' awareness of their research skills and its influence on their professional development.

Eylem Araştırmasının Hizmet-İçi Öğretmen Eğitimi İçinde Kullanılması

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Öz

Bugüne kadarki öğretmen bilişi çalışmaları, öğretmenlerin yazma, okur-yazarlık, öğrenme ve öğretme ve karar verme süreçleri ile ilgili inançlarına odaklanmıştır. Eğer varsa, olan çok az çalışma da, öğretmenlerin eylem araştırması ile ilgili karar verme süreçlerini araştırmıştır. Bu boşluğu doldurmak amacıyla, bu çalışma, eylem araştırmasının öğretmenlerin bilişsel süreçlerine etkisini araştırmaktadır. Bu çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Bir akademik yıl boyunca, master seviyesinde hizmet-İçi öğretmen eğitimi alan öğretmenler eylem araştırması yapmış, bu süreci raporlamış ve bu konuda yansıtıcı günlükler tutmuşlardır. Bu süreçteki karar verme süreçlerini daha iyi anlayabilmek için öğretmenlerle eylem araştırmaları üzerine röportajlar yapılmıştır. Araştırmada toplanan nitel veri içerik analizi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar, katılımcıların eylem araştırmasını öğretim pratiklerinde kullanmak isteseler de bazı kurumsal ve bağlamsal zorluklar nedeniyle eylem araştırmasını sonuna kadar kullanamadıklarını göstermiştir. Bu çalışmanın sonuçları İngilizce öğretmenlerinin araştırma yöntemleri ve mesleki gelişimleri konusunda farkındalıklarına ışık tutmaktadır.

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Introduction

Conducting action research (AR) is considered important for teachers' professional development, their actual teaching practice and their theoretical knowledge (Bartels, 2001; Burns 2009; Perrett, 2003). However, for many teachers, research is a new challenge and action research an unfamiliar form of classroom research. AR is a process through which practitioners address issues of importance in their practice. In action research, the intent is always to improve practice, trying to understand why something is working as well as trying to address a practice that is not working or no longer meets personal expectation; moreover, the intended focus is to develop new practices and strategies via organized and systematic reflection and adjustment.

As AR concerns with teachers' classroom research practices, teacher cognition may help us to develop a rich understanding of these action research practices. The interface between AR and teacher cognition can advance our understanding of teaching practice in general. Most teacher cognition research to date have focused on teachers beliefs about themselves as writers (Yigitoglu & Belcher, 2014), literacy (Bausch, 2010), teaching and learning (Doyle, 1997), and decision-making processes (Woods, 1996). Second language teacher cognition related to the teaching of different skills such as grammar (e.g. Phipps & Borg, 2009), writing (Lee, 2003) and pronunciation (Baker, 2014) have also been reported in previous literature. Very few, if any, however, has investigated teachers' deliberate decision-making processes after action research processes. In an attempt to address this gap in literature, this exploratory research study investigates the influence of AR on teacher cognition.

Literature Review

AR is considered as an inquiry on a teacher's practice and helps them to renovate their classrooms and help them improve their classroom instruction (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). Until the late 1980s, AR had not received much attention. Action research was initially defined as a form of self-reflective inquiry (Kemmis, 1983). Later, Ebbutt defined it as the systematic study of attempts to improve educational practice by groups of participants by means of their own practical actions and by means of their own reflection upon the effects of those actions (Ebbutt, 1985). Sagor (2000) stated that AR is a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action. Sagor (2000) suggests that there are three purposes for AR: (1) building the reflective practitioner, (2) making progress on school wide priorities, and (3) building a professional culture in the educational arena. These outcomes create an environment of learning and progress targeting educational goals, and as a result the focus of many school-based activities has become these outcomes. In non-English dominant contexts such as Turkey, developing reflective practitioners who are decision-makers in teacher education programs is one of the main goals of teacher educators. Thus, it seems that teacher educators may need to include the AR process as a strategy for ongoing professional and personal development in teaching and learning.

As Burns (2009) suggests, the goal of AR is "to bridge the gap between the ideal (the most effective way of doing things) and the real (actual ways of doing things)" (p. 290). As is the case, it may have some links with teacher cognition. Teacher cognition is broadly defined as what teachers think, know and believe (Borg, 2003a, 2006). A key factor in investigating teacher cognition is the actions of teachers both within and outside of the classroom. Most teacher cognition research to date has focused on teachers' beliefs about themselves as writers (Yigitoglu & Belcher, 2014), literacy (Bausch, 2010), teaching and learning (Doyle, 1997), and decision-making processes (Woods, 1996). Teacher cognition related to different skills such as grammar (Borg, 2001; 2003b; Farrell & Lim, 2005; Phipps & Borg, 2009), writing (Lee, 2003; Yigitoglu & Belcher, 2014) and pronunciation (Baker, 2014) has also been reported. Very few, if any, however, investigated teachers' deliberate decision-making processes after AR processes.

What makes AR unique in terms of teacher cognition research is that AR is "a planned, methodological observation related to one's teaching" (Johnson, 2009, p.1). As such, teachers adopting AR are more conscious and aware of their own immediate teaching environments and their real-life problems. As Gustavsen, Hansson, and Quvale (2008) acknowledge "[t]he major advantage of AR

compared to the production of 'words alone' is the creation of practices. While words often have a slippery relationship to reality, forms of practices are reality" (p.63) . As reported by Berger, Boles and Troen (2005), this process may include different paradoxes and still may influence both the culture of schools and the teaching and learning experiences.

As well-acknowledged in literature by now, AR is important for the development of teachers. It is equally important for teacher educators. In order to underline the importance of AR for other stakeholders such as teacher educators, Bartels (2001) puts forward the following question, "Is AR only for language teachers?" As Burns indicates, "Indeed, the majority of the (limited number of) publications on AR produced by teacher educators have tended to be of the how-to variety, rather than being reflective of widespread experiences of conducting AR themselves" (p. 293). A brief look at the related literature also confirms Burns' statement: Previous research has provided us with a solid background on how to conduct AR studies (e.g. Crookes, 1993; Edge, 2001; Hopkins, 1993; McNiff, 1988). Very few, if any, however, have focused on the interface between teacher cognition and their AR practices. Such research-based information may help better inform teaching practices in teacher education programs in general and second language teacher education programs in particular. In an attempt to address this gap in literature and the need in teacher education programs, the present paper attempts to contribute to the area of second language teacher development in terms of the investigated constructs, the research focuses on the interface between AR and teacher cognition.

Methodology

This exploratory research study investigates the influence of AR on teacher cognition. The present research adopts a qualitative research methodology. During one academic year (i.e. two fifteen-week semesters), 15 in-service teachers who were completing their master's degree (MA) were invited to participate in the research.

Context and Participants

This research was conducted at an English-medium university located in Istanbul, Turkey. At the time of the present study, the participants all worked full-time either in a K-12 School or a high school. They were all Turkish and teaching English in different Turkish schools. Their teaching experiences varied between one and 10 years. At the time of the present study, they were pursuing their MA degree in English Language Education . They were enrolled in this MA program for different purposes: (1) for professional development purposes, (2) for becoming a teacher trainer or (3) for pursuing their academic career further in doctoral study after the completion of their MA degrees.

As all of the participants were full-time teachers, they could only take one or two courses per semester. The requirements of the MA program included courses including but not limited to teaching language skills, quantitative and qualitative research methods, teacher education, and technology in ELT. In most of the courses, they were required to conduct a classroom-based research and report the results in a final project format. Like most of their MA courses, the participants in the present study were trained to conduct action research studies first and they were asked to participate in semi-structured interviews based on their AR experiences.

Action Research Training and Interviews

In this study, MA students first were given some training on how to conduct an action research in their own teaching environments. It took two weeks; and they were provided with both theoretical and practical knowledge on Action Research. The MA students made analysis on the AR project that they completed before in the field of EFL/ESL. Through this process, they also started to think about problematic areas in their teaching or their students' learning process in order to identify the problem.

After this training stage, MA-student in-service teachers were asked to complete English teachers' action research proposals, in which they formulated their hypothesis or research questions based on

their problems in their classrooms, their action plan (i.e. 4-6 weeks plan of action); then they conducted their plans, and wrote reports and reflections. In an attempt to get a fuller perspective on teachers' perceptions on AR, the participants were also interviewed regarding their AR projects after they completed and submitted their projects. These interviews were semi-structured and included questions regarding their AR experiences (Please see the appendix for interview guide). Before the interviews, the participants were informed about the procedure for the interview and their consent was taken and all of them volunteered for the interviews. Each interview lasted for 45 minutes to 1 hour. These interviews were transcribed.

To gather in depth data, content analysis was employed to analyze the data obtained from reflections, reports and interviews. Content analysis, as one of the most widely used qualitative data analysis techniques in educational research, may have different approaches. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) listed three different ways to apply content analysis: (1) *conventional content analysis* design which allows the categories and names for categories to emerge from the data, (2) *directed content analysis* which validates the existing theories and framework(s), and (3) *summative content analysis* which aims to identify and quantify certain words with a purpose of understanding the contextual use of such investigated constructs. For the purposes of the present study, conventional content analysis was employed to gain direct emic information from the study participants without imposing pre-set categories and/or theoretical perspectives. As such, we aimed to analyze the data without any pre-set codes and, thus, to develop a theory that emerged from the collected data.

Findings

Content analysis of the data suggested that there are two main themes emerged from the data collected: (1) reported challenges faced when conducting action research, and (2) perceived functions of AR.

Reported Challenges When Conducting Action Research

MA-student in-service teachers underlined the challenges they faced as they conducted their action research studies. They reported some institutional challenges and some methodological challenges. Most teachers commented that they did not have much support from the administration when conducting their AR studies. Teacher 1, for instance, explained some of the challenges she faced in the following way:

I conducted two different AR studies at this school. My research studies were about reading and writing skills. I had some problems with my institution. The manager of the school was against. He just wanted to apply curriculum. (Teacher 1).

Teacher 4, similarly, commented on some of the challenges she faced from the administrative side. She stated that "Administration never supports research studies. They don't get that this is for making the education better. For them, spending time for an action research is a waste of time" (Teacher 4). This frustration, in her own words, continued even after she transformed her teaching practice based on the results she received from her AR study. She commented on this issue in the following way: "After some weeks, I noticed that the solutions that I find out thanks to my action research were not welcomed by my administration. This disappointed me a lot."

Some participants faced some challenges not only from the administrative staff but also from their students. One of the teachers commented that "The reactions of the participants was difficult. The school I was working at was not so willing to help me conduct my research." (Teacher 7). Teacher 4, similarly, commented on this issue in the following: "I sometimes feel that students give answers without reading or thinking. I can't help thinking that because they don't even read the exam questions. Therefore, I have suspicions about the data analysis results" (Teacher 4).

In addition to the challenges received from administrative staff, the participants also underlined some contextual challenges that were present in their teaching environment. Some teachers, for example, commented on the lack of collaboration between teachers with regards to conducting action research studies. Teacher 4, when listing the challenges she faced when conducting an action research, she commented on this issue in the following way: "Teachers who give up doing something for their profession pose really a big challenge. There was no collaboration and it was challenging to conduct an action research all alone". Another contextual challenge was the teaching load. Most teachers commented that demanding teaching loads made them worry about completing the activities rather than completing the action research studies which they want to do. Teacher 6, for example, commented on this issue in the following way: "The most important challenge is time. When you teach full time, it is not easy to allocate extra time to do action research, because the program is very packed and you can barely cover all the materials you need to during class."

In some cases, action research was challenging because of some internal factors. All of the participants in this study taught and conducted their research studies during the day and took some MA level classes at night. As a result, they exchanged their roles as teachers, students, and researchers. This was especially the case when evaluating the effectiveness of the AR studies they conducted. Teacher 9, for example, explained this issue in the following way:

I've done only one AR. It was pretty challenging to do an AR as it involved being the researcher and the participant as a teacher at the same time. Assuming both roles was challenging. (Teacher 9)

Most teachers commented that AR was challenging mainly because they lacked necessary methodological background to conduct such AR studies. Teacher 3 and Teacher 11, for instance, explained this issue as follows:

To my mind AR is scientifically explained and statistically expressed form of what you actually do as a teacher. It might be difficult due to lack of background in research methods and statistics. (Teacher 3)

The challenges are based on collecting data via interviews, analysis and videotaping, etc. Furthermore, not being aware of these steps while conducting AR made me a little stressful but then I learned how to form them via this lecture. (Teacher 11)

As can be seen from the excerpts above, Teacher 3 and Teacher 11 underlined the importance of knowing necessary research methods for conducting AR studies. Teacher 4, on the other hand, stated that as she internalized some of the research methods, and thus, it was not a challenge for her. The real challenge was facing the challenges she encountered during her research process. She commented on this issue in the following way:

I have conducted 4 ARs throughout the MA classes. At first, it seemed really challenging but once I internalized the methodology of applying an action research in various context, I felt confident then but there are some challenges that I faced up as teacher-researcher: having interviews, getting permission from the school administrators, timing and having subjective assessment, confictions among research team but these confictions result from methodological and philosophical differences. (Teacher 2)

Some other teacher participants, however, found different stages of data collection challenging. For Teacher 7, the review of literature stage was difficult whereas for Teacher 1 data analysis was challenging. They explained this issue in the following way:

Doing an action research was challenging at the beginning. Finding related articles for the Literature Review was difficult when I first started, but afterwards conducting surveys, interviewing the participants, and analyzing the results became more difficult. Most of the steps were challenging but once I started experiencing it became better. (Teacher 7)

I have some problems about data collection and analysis parts. It should be taught more detailed. We learn how to collect data theoretically. It should be taught more practically. (Teacher 1)

In sum, the results indicated that the participants reported some institutional and methodological challenges they faced when they conducted action research studies. In some cases, students and/or administrative personnel posed some challenges. Some other participants found conducting action research challenging because they felt that they needed more methodological experience with regards to different types of data collection tools.

Perceived Functions of Action Research in Language Teaching

Most teachers who participated in the present study indicated several benefits of conducting AR studies. While some of them underlined the importance of AR to improve their teaching practices, others indicated the role of AR studies for self-improvement. Teacher 6, for instance, underlined the role of AR studies to find practical solutions. He explained this issue in the following way: "Of course, an action research can be an important tool on focusing on certain problems that arise in your class, or in your teaching and also, in coming up with practical solutions to these issues" (Teacher 6). Teacher 10, similarly, talked about the role of AR studies to improve teaching practices: "In my opinion, there is always a need for an AR in all of the classrooms. There is no perfect classroom. Even if a classroom is problem-free, there is always a need for improvement" (Teacher 10).

It seems clear that for some teachers AR played a role in improving instructional practices. For some others, however, it was important to include AR in order to see the different phrases in their own teaching practices. Teacher 7, for instance, talked about the influences of action research on her teaching practice in the following way: "In order to see the developmental period of English teaching and learning there is a need for conducting a research" (Teacher 7). Later in the interview, she also talked about the role of AR in determining what to do in future teaching practices: "I love implication parts of any AR done about teaching English. This part gives me inspiration for many other things that can be used in teaching" (Teacher 7). Similarly, she also talked about her goal in conducting AR in the following way: "I want to do AR because I wonder how to solve my "teacher talk" problem. I rarely wait for the students to talk. I can't stand silence in the classroom, so I talk all the time. I wonder how my students feel, and what strategies my colleagues are using" (Teacher 7).

In some cases, AR served as a lens to see the influences of instructional practices. Teacher 10, for instance, talked specifically about the role of action research in determining the problem areas and future research topics as follows: "Yes, it is important to include AR because it is a need to see what is wrong with the class and your teaching, and try to solve it having lots of ideas when you do research about it" (Teacher 10). Similarly, for Teacher 9, AR materials she created worked as a reference material for future teaching practices. She explained this issue in the following way: "Yes, the material I had prepared for my "Action Research" will open the way for me to prepare more communicative speaking tasks like the" Information-Gap activities/Role Play" tasks" (Teacher 9).

It seems important to acknowledge the influences of AR on teaching practices. The results also indicated that for some teachers, AR help discover their self-perceptions as teachers. Teacher 5, for example, talked about the influences of AR on herself as a teacher in the following way: "After I completed my AR, I really felt happy. Because I tried to encourage my students to learn English by using and participating activities and I noticed my students' speaking ability became to improve" (Teacher 5). Teacher 1 also mentioned this kind of influence of AR on herself. She talked about this function in the following way: "Conducting AR is a kind of self-improvement. I can be aware of both my and students' deficiencies by the help of AR"(Teacher 1).

Some teachers indicated that AR gave them more tools to navigate teaching practice in the future. Teacher 2, for instance, stated that AR should be promoted more in teacher education programs because, without guidance, it is hard to see teaching profession from different angles. She explained her thoughts in the following way:

There is absolutely a need for me to do action research in my teaching practices because in ESL/EFL classes, there are many cases that we need to consider, develop, and improve. Hence there are many things to take into consideration such as types learning styles, effects of technological developments in learning, changes in curriculum and its results in students' behavior and performance. So, educators need to promote more action research in our field, I think it is also encouraging for teachers. (Teacher 2)

Similarly, Teacher 11 also stated the need for action research for language teachers and language researchers. He specifically talked about the role of AR in developing ideas and changing perspectives in language teaching. He further commented on this issue as follows:

Certainly, we always need it for being foreign language teacher researchers because all the lessons are deepened and shaped in a professional sense with the help of researchers like action research. It broadens my horizon and changes ideas with the pragmatic ideas through the process of systematic inquiry; moreover, it is critically important to comprehend the quality of educative process and the system that we are in. (Teacher 11)

In sum, the analysis of the data indicated that most teacher participants appreciated the role of AR in their development as language teachers. In some cases, teachers underlined self-improving role of action research studies. In some others, AR was perceived to have some influences on their immediate teaching and instructional practices. Some teachers also indicated the role of action research in promoting their professional development as language teachers.

Discussion

This paper focused on the role of AR in in-service teacher education programs. Results indicated that the participants' research practices were primarily about the research projects required for their MA classes and thus their action research practices were limited. In the interviews, the participants underlined the importance of professional development, or what they did as the requirement of this MA course; but they also worried that they may not be conducting any other AR in their future practices. This, in their own views, may be due to the constraints of the education system in Turkey because the teachers have an overload of teaching hours, and they have almost no incentives for professional development. Similar concerns were also reported in different settings (e.g. Berger, Boles & Troen, 2005) and specifically in Turkey (e.g. Koksall and Razi, 2011). Thus, it is possible to argue that in-service teachers may want to include AR practices in their teaching practices, but their practices may not reflect their beliefs regarding AR. This finding is in line with the results of Phipps and Borg (2009), which reported the tensions in teachers' beliefs about and practices of grammar teaching, Yesilbursa (2011) which reported an individual tendency in teachers' beliefs when conducting an action research and Bausch (2010), which underlined a contradiction between writing teachers' stated beliefs, self-perceptions and practice.

The participants expressed some challenges regarding some stakeholders such as school administration. This issue has also been reported in literature. Mainly referring to teacher cognition related to L2 writing feedback practices, Lee (2003) suggests teachers adapt a reflective approach to written feedback practices. As Lee notes, "If, however, the main stakeholders like school administrators, parents and students continue to insist that teachers mark errors in certain ways, it is unlikely that innovative ideas about error correction will gain ground." (2003, p. 231) Moreover, Crocco, Faithfull, and Schwartz (2003) explored whether there was a connection between a professional development of an urban high school and a college of education when they used AR to figure out curriculum and assessment practices for their diverse student population. They highlighted that AR can be directly connected to the goals of the classroom teacher or school; on the other hand they also indicated that such partnership has also its own challenges stemming from both the school sites and at the college.

The project described in this study was a requirement of one of their MA courses and it sparked the participants' interests in AR. Some of them were really passionate about their teaching and their

students' learning and ready to overcome the possible challenges when they attempt to conduct any AR studies in their classrooms in the future. Based on these cases, we do think that teacher trainers should emphasize the importance of action research in their courses and encourage the in-service teachers to overcome some of the challenges they may face on the way. For example, in the term following the present study, some of the graduate students who participated in the present study reported that in their schools, they started to conduct AR in collaboration with other colleagues. This indicates that raising graduate students' awareness about AR studies may result in their AR practices in the long run. The importance of AR in teacher education programs has also been noted in previous literature. Ainscow (2008), for example, also mentions that when it is used as a tool, AR can become an important research method to be conducted in school in addition, this leads to collaborative research studies and partnerships between universities and the schools to initiate and empower inclusive practices to help support diversity in schools. This, in the long run, may result in different practices such as collaborative AR program between university and schools emphasizing the potential of such partnership and the possibilities and opportunities to find practical solutions to problems in classroom settings, teaching, and learning.

Conclusions and Implications

In the light of this AR project conducted in one of our MA courses, we hope to raise awareness in the importance of AR on their teachers' professional development, and also its effect on the students' learning. Based on the results of the project, we propose integrating AR in teacher education program curricula for in-service teachers in the higher education in Turkey as well. There seems to be a great need to integrate AR in teacher education programs in Turkey as it will enhance professional development. In particular, we suggest that graduate language teacher education programs and even the undergraduate language teacher education programs should include action research courses as one of the major subjects of their curricula in the future. Last but not least, curriculum developers, course designers, teacher educators and trainers may also benefit from the results of this study in terms of educational research and professional development. In graduate programs, for each course, conducting an AR and sharing the results can be one of the requirements. In this way, the graduate students will have a chance to explore their teaching through the AR practices. For example, at the end of each term in graduate programs, graduate seminar can be organized in which each graduate student presents his or her AR project and get feedback from each other. After this study, both we – research mentors- and the mentees learned a lot about the importance of sharing what goes on in the academy and what goes on in the real teaching environment. Therefore, both the academy, schools, and the course developers need to collaborate in order to achieve the high standards in education. To overcome the problem faced with the administrations while conducting the action research, the university professors may meet with the administration in K12 schools and inform them about the aim of the AR projects and why some of the teachers working in those institutions will be conducting AR; additionally, what the K12 schools will gain out of these AR projects should be clearly explained to the administration.

The outcomes of the present study aims to shed light on English teachers' awareness of their research skills and its influence on their professional development. The present study, together with other studies on incorporating AR, may provide a basis for a model for integrating action research in teacher education programs for in-service teachers. Last but not least, curriculum developers, course designers, teacher educators and trainers may benefit from the results of this study in terms of educational research and professional development.

There are some implications for future research on AR and teacher education. Future research studies might take a more ethnographic approach to investigate possible changes in in-service teachers' attitudes towards action research in different times. In addition, it might be interesting to focus on different groups of teachers (e.g. novice versus experienced, teachers at primary schools versus high schools and teachers teaching languages versus teachers teaching content-area courses). Lastly, future case studies can present in-depth explorations of action research practices of in-service teachers in various settings.

Finally, this graduate course project has some implications for future research on AR and teacher education. Future research studies might take a more ethnographic approach to investigate possible changes in in-service teachers' attitudes towards AR in different times. In addition, it might be interesting to focus on different groups of teachers (e.g. novice versus experienced, teachers at primary schools versus high schools and teachers teaching languages versus teachers teaching content-area courses). Lastly, future case studies can present in-depth explorations of AR practices of in-service teachers in various settings. In addition, research mentors can collaborate in a study where different shareholders will be participants to conduct a project to show the importance of AR in each level of EFL teaching environments.

Türkçe Sürümü

Giriş[†]

Eylem araştırması, öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimleri için önemli bir araç olarak görülmektedir (Bartels, 2001; Burns 2009; Perrett, 2003). Ancak, birçok öğretmen için araştırma yeni bir alan olmakla beraber eylem araştırması bilinmeyen bir sınıf araştırması modelidir. Eylem araştırmasında amaç, her zaman uygulamayı geliştirmek, yolunda gitmeyen sınıf uygulamalarını anlamak, bunları belirlemek, neden ihtiyaçlara cevap vermediğini tespit etmektir. Ayrıca, hedeflenen odak noktası, yeni uygulamaları ve stratejileri, organize edilmiş ve sistematik yansımalar ve adaptasyonlar aracılığıyla geliştirmektir.

Eylem araştırması, öğretmenlerin sınıf araştırma uygulamalarıyla ilgilendiği gibi, öğretmen bilişselliği de eylem araştırması uygulamalarını daha zengin bir zeminde anlayıp bu araştırmaların geliştirilmesine yardımcı olmaktadır. Günümüze kadar olan öğretmen bilişselliği çalışmalarının çoğu öğretmenlerin yazar olarak kendileri hakkındaki bilgilerine (Yiğitoğlu & Belcher, 2014), okuryazarlık (Bausch, 2010), öğretme ve öğrenme (Doyle, 1997) ve karar verme süreçlerine (Woods, 1996) odaklanmaktadır. Daha önceki bazı çalışmalarda, ikinci dil öğretmeni bilişselliği ile ilgili farklı öğretim becerileri gibi konular da çalışılmıştır. Bu konular arasında dilbilgisi (Phipps & Borg, 2009), yazma (Lee, 2003) ve telafuz (Baker, 2014) konuları yer almaktadır. Ancak, çok az denecek kadar sayıda çalışma eylem araştırma süreci sonrası öğretmenlerin karar verme süreçlerini araştırmıştır. Alandaki bu açığı kapamak amacıyla, bu çalışma eylem araştırmasının öğretmen bilişi üzerindeki etkisine bakmaktadır.

Alan yazın taraması

Eylem araştırması öğretmenlerin pedagojik uygulamaları ve öğretimlerinin geliştirmelerine yardımcı olacak bir araştırma olarak görülmektedir (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). İlk önce, eylem araştırması, özyansıtımlı bir araştırma ve sorgulama olarak tanımlanmıştır (Kemmis, 1983). Daha sonra, Ebbutt eğitim uygulamalarını geliştirmek için öğretmenler tarafından uygulanan ve kendi eylemleri üzerinde kendi yansımalarıyla geliştirdikleri sistematik bir çalışma olarak tanımlamıştır (Ebbutt, 1985). Sagor (2000) eylem araştırmasının üç amacından bahsetmektedir: (1) yansıtıcı uygulamayı geliştirmek, (2) okul temelli önceliklerde ilerleme sağlamak, ve (3) eğitim alanında profesyonel kültür geliştirmek. Bu çıktılar, okul-temelli aktivitelerin amaçlandığı öğrenme ortamları ve eğitim amaçlı süreçleri ortaya çıkartmaktadır. Türkiye gibi İngilizce'nin ana dili olarak konuşulmadığı bağlamlarda, yansıtımcı ve kendi kararlarını veren uygulamacılar yetiştirmek, öğretmen eğitimcilerinin en önemli hedeflerinden biridir. Bu nedenle, öğretim ve öğrenmede, öğretmen eğitimcileri kişisel ve profesyonel gelişimin devamı için eylem araştırmasını bir süreç olarak kullanmaya gereksinim duymaktadırlar.

Burns'un (2009) önerdiği gibi, eylem araştırmasının amacı ideal ve gerçek arasındaki açığı birleştirmektir. Bu nedenle, öğretmen bilişi ile bağlantısı vardır. Öğretmen bilişi, öğretmenlerin düşündükleri, bildikleri, ve inadıkları şeyler olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Borg, 2003a, 2006). Öğretmen bilişini incelerken anahtar etken öğretmenlerin sınıf içi ve sınıf dışı eylemleridir.

Eylem araştırmasını öğretmen bilişi araştırmaları açısından önemli yapan unsur, "eylem araştırmasının planlı, öğretimin yönetsel gözlemiyle alakalı olmasıdır" (Johnson, 2009, s.1). Bundan dolayı, eylem araştırmasını kullanan öğretmenler, öğretim bağlamları ve gerçek hayat problemleri hakkında daha bilinçli davranırlar. Gustavsen, Hansson, and Quvale (2008) "eylem araştırmasının temel avantajının uygulamaların yaratıcısı olmasından kaynaklandığını" (s.63) belirtmektedir. Berger, Boles

[†] Makalenin Türkçe sürümü, araştırmanın nitel olmasından doğabilecek anlam kaymalarının önüne geçmek amacıyla, İngilizce aslından Türkçe'ye özetlenerek çevrilmiştir. Türkçe ve İngilizce arasındaki söz dizim farkından oluşan farklılıklar, İngilizce'den Türkçe'ye anlamına göre çeviri yaparak aşılmıştır.

and Troen (2005) bu sürecin farklı paradokslar içerdiğini ve bunun okul kültürünü ve öğretim ve öğrenme deneyimlerini etkileyebileceğini vurgulamaktadırlar.

Bugüne kadar olan alan yazın, eylem araştırmasının öğretmenlerin gelişimi açısından önemli olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Eylem araştırması, öğretmen eğitimcileri için de aynı derece önemli bir konudur. Eylem araştırmasının önemini vurgulamak için, Bartels (2001) "Eylem araştırması sadece dil öğretmenleri için midir?" sorusunu sormaktadır. Burns'ın belirttiği gibi, "aslında eylem araştırması konusunda yapılan çalışmalar, yansıtıcı olmaktan çok, eylem araştırmasının nasıl yapılacağı konusuna odaklanmıştır" (s. 293). Daha önce yapılmış olan araştırmalar (örneğin; Crookes, 1993; Edge, 2001; Hopkins, 1993; NcNiff, 1988), eylem araştırmasının nasıl yapılması konusunda temel sağlamaktadır. Çok az sayıda çalışma öğretmen bilşi ve eylem araştırması uygulamalarına odaklanmıştır.

Yöntem

Bu araştırma eylem araştırmasının öğretmen bilşine etkisine bakmıştır. Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Bir akademik yıl boyunca , master seviyesinde hizmet-içi öğretmen eğitimi alan öğretmenler eylem araştırması yapmış, bu süreci raporlamış ve bu konuda yansıtıcı günlükler tutmuşlardır.

Bağlam ve katılımcılar

Bu çalışma İstanbul'da İngilizce eğitim veren bir üniversitede tamamlanmıştır. Araştırmanın verilerinin toplandığı zamanda katılımcılar ilk veya orta öğretim kurumlarında öğretmen olarak çalışmaktalardı. Katılımcıların hepsi Türk öğretmenlerdi ve İngilizceyi okullarda yabancı dil olarak öğretmekteydi. Deneyimleri 1 ve 10 yıl arasında değişmekteydi. Bu çalışmanın bağlamını oluşturan hizmet-içi eğitim programına farklı amaçlarla katılmışlardı: Bazıları mesleki gelişimi için, bazıları öğretmen eğitici eğitmeni olmak için ve bazıları da master derecelerinin sonunda doktora programına devam ederek akademik kariyer yapmak için bu programa kayıt olmuşlardı.

Eylem Araştırması Eğitimleri ve Röportajlar

Bu çalışmada, hizmet-içi eğitime katılan öğretmenler öncelikle eylem araştırmasının nasıl yapıldığına dair iki haftalık bir eğitim aldılar. Bu eğitim, hem teorik hem de pratik bilgileri içerdi. Bu eğitimin sonunda kendi sınıflarında uygulayabilecekleri eylem araştırmaları geliştirdiler ve 4-6 haftalık bir eylem araştırması planı oluşturdular. Bunun sonunda öğretmenlerle bu süreçle ilgili bir röportaj yapıldı. Röportaj süreleri 45 dakikadan 1 saate kadar değişti.

Araştırmada içerik analiziyöntemi kullanılmıştır. Hsieh ve Shannon (2005) içerik analizi için üç farklı yöntem listelemiştir: (1) kategori ve temaların datadan çıkartıldığı *geleneksel içerik analizi*, (2) hali hazırda varolan teorileri doğrulayan *yönlendirilmiş içerik analizi* ve (3) bazı kelimelerin varlığını ve sayısını ölçen *toplantılmış içerik analizi*. Bu çalışmada öğretmenlerin düşüncelerine ulaşabilmek için geleneksel içerik analizi kullanılmıştır.

Sonuçlar

Verinin içerik analizi toplanan verinin iki temaya odaklandığını göstermiştir: (1) eylem araştırması yaparken karşılaşılan zorluklar ve (2) eylem araştırmasının işlevi.

Eylem araştırması yaparken karşılaşılan zorluklar

Katılımcılar eylem araştırması yaparken bazı sorunlar yaşadıklarını belirttiler. Bu sorunların bir kısmı kurumsal ve yönetsel sorunlar olarak belirtildi. Birçok öğretmen katılımcı, kendileri eylem araştırması yaparken yönetimden destek görmediklerini belirtti. Bazı katılımcılar zorlukların sadece yönetimden değil bazı durumlarda öğrencilerden de kaynaklandığını belirtti.

Bazı durumlarda eylem araştırmasının zorluğu, yönetim ve öğrenciler gibi dışsal faktörlerden değil; öğretmenlerin içsel faktörlerinden kaynaklandığı belirtildi. Bazı katılımcı öğretmenler bu süreçte yönetsel bilgi eksiklerinin olduğunu ve bu sebeple etkili bir eylem araştırması süreci geçirmediklerini

belirtti. Bazı katılımcılar ise eylem araştırma yapılmasına dair yönetsel bilgiye sahip olsalar bile eylem araştırmasının farklı aşamalarında karşılaşılan zorluklara karşı ne yapacaklarını bilmediklerini ve bunun eylem araştırması sürecini zorlaştırdığını belirttiler.

Sonuç olarak, katılımcılar eylem araştırmasının bazı zorluklarını listelediler. Bunlar yönetsel ve öğrenci kaynaklı dış faktörler olabileceği gibi deneyim ve bilgi eksikliğine bağlı içsel faktörler olarak listelendi.

Eylem araştırmasının işlevi

Araştırmaya katılan birçok katılımcı, eylem araştırmasının farklı yararlarından bahsetti. Bazıları eylem araştırmasının kendi öğretim tekniklerini geliştirdiğini belirtirken bazıları eylem araştırmasının kendilerine kişisel gelişim sağladığının altını çizdi. Bazı öğretmenler için eylem araştırması öğretimde karşılaştıkları zorluklara karşı pratik çözümler sundu. Diğer katılımcılar eylem araştırmasının sadece hali hazırdaki öğretim deneyimlerine değil; aynı zamanda potansiyel olarak gelecekteki öğretim tekniklerine de katkıda bulunabileceğini belirttiler.

Sonuç olarak birçok katılımcı eylem araştırmasının kendi gelişimleri için olumlu katkıda bulunduğunu belirtti. Bazı katılımcılar, eylem araştırmasının hali hazırdaki öğretim tekniklerine olumlu katkılarından bahsetti. Diğer katılımcılar ise eylem araştırmasının kendilerini uzun vadede olumlu yönde etkileyeceğini belirttiler. Ayrıca bazı katılımcılar da eylem araştırmasının kendilerine mesleki gelişim imkanı sunduğunun altını çizdiler.

Tartışma

Bu makale eylem araştırmasının hizmet-içi eğitimindeki rolüne odaklanmıştır. Sonuçlar, katılımcıların eylem araştırmasını proje için tamamladığını ve eylem araştırması pratiklerinin görece olarak kısıtlı olduğunu göstermiştir. Bazı katılımcılar, bu eylem araştırması pratiklerinin araştırma ortamında yapıldığını ancak uzun vadede öğretim pratiklerine etki edip etmeyeceği konusunda endişeli olduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Katılımcılar çalışma ortamlarındaki yoğun çalışma sistemi bulunduğunu ve mesleki gelişim için imkanların olmadığını belirtmişlerdir. Bu sonuçlar daha önceki çalışmalarda da belirtilmiştir. Katılımcılar eylem araştırmasının yapılamamasının bir sebebinin idari yönetim olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Bu konu da daha önceki çalışmalarda bahsedilen zorlukları doğrulamıştır.

Bu çalışmada anlatılan eylem araştırması, bir hizmet-içi eğitiminin bir parçasıydı ve katılımcılar tarafından ilgi ile karşılandı. Bazı katılımcılar ileride eylem araştırması yapmak istediklerini ve karşılaşılabilecekleri zorluklara hazır olduklarını belirttiler. Bu sonuçlara dayanarak, öğretmen eğitiminde eylem araştırmasının önemini vurgulamak ve öğretmenleri eylem araştırması yapmaları konusunda cesaretlendirmek gerektiğine inanıyoruz.

Sonuç ve Öneriler

Biz, yüksek lisans derslerimizden birinde uyguladığımız bu çalışmayla, eylem araştırmasının öğretmenlerin profesyonel gelişimleri ve öğrenme süreçleri üzerindeki etkisinin önemi hakkında farkındalık arttırmayı hedefledik. Projenin sonuçlarına dayanarak, eylem araştırmasının hizmet-içi eğitimi bağlamında müfredata entegre edilmesini öneriyoruz. Eylem araştırmasının mesleki gelişimi destekleyeceğini düşündüğümüzden, Türkiye'deki öğretmen eğitimi programlarına entegre edilmesinin gerekli olduğunu düşünüyoruz. Özellikle, öğretmen eğitimi yüksek lisans programları, hatta lisansöğretmen eğitimi programları, müfredatlarına eylem araştırmasına dair dersleri eklemelerini öneriyoruz. Yüksek lisans programlarında, eylem araştırması uygulaması ve sonuçlarının paylaşılmasıyla lisansüstü öğrencileri, kendi uygulamalarını keşfedip geliştirme şansı yakalayabilirler.

Bu çalışma eylem araştırmasına odaklanan diğer çalışmalar ile birlikte değerlendirildiğinde hizmet içi eğitimi için eylem araştırmasını entegre eden bir model için temel olabilir. Bu konuda ileride yapılacak çalışmalar, öğretmenlerin farklı zamanlarda eylem araştırmasına karşı olan tutumunu inceleyebilir ve farklı öğretmen gruplarıyla eylem araştırmasına yönelik çalışmalar yaparak sonuçların aynı olup

olmadığına bakabilirler. Farklı ortamlarda yapılacak olan vaka çalışmaları, eylem araştırması çalışmalarıkonusunda daha detaylı sonuçlar verebilir.

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Appendix: Interview Guide

1. Can you tell me about yourself?
2. Can you please explain the types of classes that you teach this semester?
3. Can you tell me about your action research practices?
4. Do you think it is challenging to do action research? If so, what were some challenges you have faced as a teacher?
5. Do you think there is a need for you to conduct action research in your teaching practices?
6. Having completed your action research projects, how do you feel about that experience?
7. Is there any part(s) of action research that you felt was useful for your future teaching practices?
8. Did you face any difficulties as you conduct your action research?
9. If you want to do other action research projects, what kind of information do you need to complete them?
10. As a teacher who has gone through an action research process, what recommendations do you have for yourself as a teacher for your action research practices in the future?
11. Do you find it is easy or difficult to conduct action research in your teaching practices?
12. Do you feel satisfied or dissatisfied about action research you have conducted?
13. Does conducting an action research cause you feel anxiety?
14. Do you perceive yourself as competent to conduct action research in your future teaching practices?